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**House Ways and Means Committee
HB369 State Library Resource Center Funding
February 15, 2023, Support**

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Dear Delegate Atterbeary and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

The Talbot County Free Library strongly supports HB 369 State Library Resource Center - Funding which would continue the periodic increases to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) per capita funding formula beyond FY 2024.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's Central Library was designated to be the State Library Resource Center in 1971 in an effort to provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services in Maryland. Unlike most states, Maryland does not have a State Library making access to SLRC services critical to Maryland libraries and citizens across the state. In FY 2022, SLRC was visited nearly 150,000 times, answered more than 255,000 reference questions, loaned more than 300,000 items, coordinated more than 46,000 interlibrary loans, and provided access to specialized databased that were searched more than 10.6 million times. In addition, SLRC provided training for librarians and public programs on genealogy and Maryland history to the public which had a combined attendance of nearly 2,800 people.

SLRC coordinates library services around the state that are filling a critical demand for services by job seekers, small business owners, early literacy, after-school safe places, and free internet and computer access. Library services are vital to successful schools, strong communities and adult education and we encourage passage of this important legislation to assure their continuation.

While the total funding for this program is small when compared to other education institutions, it has resulted in SLRC being able to support public libraries across the state. Investing in libraries is investing in employment, literacy, health, and the overall economy of all counties and jurisdictions in Maryland. I respectfully request that you fully support the State Library Resource Center's request for funding. Thank you very much for your continued support of Maryland libraries and the SLRC.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dana Newman
Director